

NEBRASKA TO GET \$5.8 MILLION TO REDUCE CLASS SIZE

In his weekly radio address, President Clinton will urge Congress to work in a bipartisan spirit to continue his plan to reduce class size in early grades to 18 students per teacher. He will also announce that the U.S. Department of Education is releasing new guidelines to help states and local school districts use the funds they will receive this summer to begin hiring well-qualified teachers to reduce class size in early grades. As the U.S. Senate considers the Education Flexibility Act, it is more important than ever that the Murray-Kennedy amendment to continue the President's class size reduction plan is passed as well.

Studies show that smaller class sizes help teachers provide more personal attention to students and spend less time on discipline; as a result students learn more and get a stronger foundation in the basic skills. In 1998, President Clinton proposed to help local schools hire 100,000 well-prepared teachers in order to reduce class size in grades 1-3 to a national average of 18, and make sure that every child gets a solid foundation in the basics. Last year, the President signed into law the first installment of his seven-year, \$12.4 billion proposal to hire 100,000 new teachers nationwide. For the first year, \$1.2 billion was provided to help local communities hire 30,000 teachers. The funds will be available to school districts in July. Local school boards will be incorporating these funds into the budgets they are developing right now for the next school year. To give communities the certainty they need to effectively plan and phase in a seven-year reduction in class size, Congress must act now.

In July, Nebraska will receive \$5.8 million as its first installment of funds to hire teachers to reduce class size in early grades. For Nebraska's largest school districts, that means:

NEBRASKA	
OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	\$1,485,405
LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS	580,891
GRAND ISLAND PUBLIC SCHO	160,682
MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS	123,525
NORTH PLATTE PUBLIC SCHO	114,542
SCOTTSDLUFF PUBLIC SCHO	107,586
BELLEVUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	100,061
KEARNEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	81,865
FREMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS	80,221
HASTINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	69,755
NORFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS	66,362
PAPILLION-LA VISTA PUBLI	66,247
COLUMBUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	60,126
SOUTH SIOUX CITY PUBLIC	58,491
WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHO	56,666
RALSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	55,615
GERING PUBLIC SCHOOLS	53,490
BEATRICE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	51,846
ALLIANCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	48,113
MC COOK PUBLIC SCHOOLS	37,829

The guidelines and total estimated school district allocations are available on the Internet at <http://www.ed.gov/inits/ClassSize/index.html>.